



FEEDING THE HUNGRY IN A CORONAVIRUS WORLD

# FIELD REPORT

SUMMER 2020

LeSEA Global

**FEED THE HUNGRY**

A full life feels good.™



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A full life feels good.™

## CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE CHANGED BUT THE MISSION HAS NOT

Like almost every other charity in the UK, coronavirus has impacted what we are able to do and how we do it. Things are more challenging; sourcing, transporting and distributing food has become more difficult.

While we're committed to feeding the hungry in body, mind and spirit, we are very aware that as an organisation, the way in which we work may look very different on the other side of this pandemic. But in and through all of this, we know first and foremost, **that God is bigger than coronavirus and His heart for the poor has not changed.** We continue to look to Him.

In this Field Report, we want to update you as to how Feed The Hungry has been impacted by coronavirus, both internationally and domestically, and what is being done to continue to serve the least, the last and the lost during these uncertain times.



Gwyn Williams  
Operations Director

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By feeding the hungry together, and delivering it in the name of Christ, you are joining with Feed The Hungry to help change people's lives for the better, for the future and for eternity.

**Please consider financially supporting the work of Feed The Hungry. To donate, phone 0303 3000 484 or visit [fth.org.uk/fieldreport](https://fth.org.uk/fieldreport)**

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# CORONAVIRUS AND WORLD HUNGER

## **Rich Smith explains some of the impact that coronavirus is having on the world's poorest.**

“Coronavirus”, “COVID-19”, “social distancing”, “self-isolating”...

Until this year, these terms were relatively unknown. Now, they're the main topics of the daily news headlines and the most frequent subjects of everyday conversations. Coronavirus has affected all of us, but “how?” and “how much?” depends on who you are and where you live.

## **THE RICH AND THE POOR**

In just about every country in the world, for those who have money, fairly good health and a reasonable living space, being told to stay at home is an inconvenience to normal life. But for

someone who is living hand to mouth or who doesn't have an adequate home to stay in, putting them under 'lockdown' is like handing them a death-sentence.

In Kibera slum in Nairobi, Kenya, the Government lockdown has been largely ignored. For a resident of Kibera, often the money they might make in a day goes to buy the food that is needed that day. There is no welfare system to fall back on, nor free healthcare available if you become ill.

Authorities have so far turned a blind-eye to the lax following of Government advice. In Kibera, coronavirus is seen as “a rich person's disease” - it spread because of rich people travelling around the world and is affecting rich countries. It's a simplistic view, and a concerning one, which disregards the possibility

of what might happen if coronavirus were to be found in a poor community like the Kibera slum. At night, the Police are more proactive with enforcement, sometimes firing their guns into the air to scare people off the streets. The poor are facing the decision of risking their health to coronavirus or risking their life for lack of work and food.

## **FOOD INSECURITY**

Zimbabwe is precariously poised on the brink of famine. At the tail end of 2019, news reports painted a picture of 60% of the population being driven to 'man-made starvation' as a result of spiralling hyperinflation of the Zimbabwean dollar. It's becoming increasingly expensive to just be alive and coronavirus has compounded the situation. In March, the Government issued a 21 day hard-lockdown, which has since been extended 'indefinitely'. Now, people are starving in their homes.

The World Food Programme, which is monitoring the situation in Zimbabwe, estimates that this year, 7.7 million Zimbabweans, approximately half of the population, will face food insecurity. The number of people facing acute food insecurity globally is estimated to be double the figure for 2019, at 235 million. Coronavirus is exasperating the already fragile situation of food insecurity.

## **WATCHING AND WAITING**

All over the world, people are watching and waiting to see how the Coronavirus pandemic plays out. It's difficult to predict what life might look like on the other side, but one certainty is that in the coming months and years, there will be more people struggling for the basics. The wedge between the rich and poor is being forced in deeper - the gap is widening, leaving millions of people wondering how they will survive.

A couple of years ago, I was challenged by this quote:

**“If you are more fortunate than others, it's better to build a longer table than a taller fence.”**

We're far from the end of this situation, which is likely to have repercussions for years to come, but as we walk through it, let's be people of compassion, grace and love, who look to help those who have been hit hardest by circumstances beyond anyone's control. If you find yourself inconvenienced but otherwise comfortable, consider extending your table to others less fortunate.

For more information, visit [fth.org.uk/world-hunger](https://fth.org.uk/world-hunger)



# RESPONDING TO CORONAVIRUS IN THE UK

***Feed The Hungry's Warehouse in Leicestershire is often a hub of activity. Food comes into the warehouse, usually from packing events from around the UK, which is sorted and stored until it's ready to be loaded on to a container and sent out to one of our church partners.***

Then coronavirus hit the world. Within a couple of short weeks, food production came to a complete halt. Packing events were postponed as schools and church buildings shut. Shipping and travel became difficult. The warehouse hub became a lot less busy...briefly.

Although Feed The Hungry's international operations have stalled slightly (there's more about that elsewhere in this Field Report), our UK-based food distribution is more active

than ever. In March, Feed The Hungry was approached by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, who were looking for organisations that could support vulnerable households and isolated individuals in the District, that may not be able to access food and other household resources, like soap and cleaning products. While food banks provide a critical service during the UK lockdown, reductions in public transport and building closures can mean that someone may not be able to access a food bank as easily. The Borough Council are eager that no one is put in a position where they can not access vital resources.

The warehouse was transformed into a food distribution centre for the Borough. Food is donated or purchased at cost

from suppliers and delivered to the warehouse. Tins, bottles and boxes are sorted onto shelves, ready for picking by volunteers. Everyone who has contact with the items follows strict hygiene procedures with handwashing and wearing PPE. Boxes of food and resources are packed, ready for distribution.

Feed The Hungry regularly receives requests for emergency parcels to be distributed. A team of volunteer couriers collect the resources from the warehouse and delivers them straight to the recipient, being mindful of social distancing.



In each food parcel, there is literature provided by the Council, which gives advice about maintaining hygiene during the lockdown. Feed The Hungry has been allowed to include a copy of 'Sorted' magazine, a publication that gently introduces people to the Christian faith.

But this is just the beginning of the Feed The Hungry UK Distribution Hub. Working with other official bodies, the reach of this service may be increased beyond the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough to serve other Districts and nearby areas.

While we are committed to trying to secure the food that is needed to continue feeding over 300,000 children and young people around the world, Feed The Hungry isn't waiting for the lockdown to lift and for normality to resume; now is the time to act and that's what we're doing. We're eager as ever to fulfil the mission that we believe that we've been called to; to take food and the Gospel to those who are vulnerable, whether overseas or on our own doorstep.



Volunteers help to pack parcels of food and then delivers them directly to the recipient.

For more information, visit [fth.org.uk/warehouse](https://fth.org.uk/warehouse)

# CORONAVIRUS IMPACT

UNITED KINGDOM



To support vulnerable people under lockdown in the UK, Feed The Hungry is working with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council to ensure that everyone in need is able to access food and hygiene products quickly. The Feed The Hungry Warehouse has been re-purposed into a local food distribution centre.

NICARAGUA



Food supplies have been severely reduced as food packing events have been postponed or cancelled. However, arrangements have been made for food to be packed by machine in the USA, which enabled two containers of meals to be sent to Nicaragua. Feed The Hungry is working with suppliers to try to secure more food in the same way.

UGANDA

KENYA



The schools have closed but, in Kenya, food is still being given out to students while following strict social distancing protocol. There have been opportunities to share the Gospel as Pastors go out on to the streets to share about the importance of hygiene.

ZAMBIA & ZIMBABWE

In Uganda, the distribution of wet (cooked) meals has needed to be suspended in the Refugee settlements that Feed The Hungry East Africa operate in. However, the young people who would usually receive the meals at school have been provided with dry meal packs that can be cooked at home instead.



Although shipping has become more difficult, two containers have arrived in Zimbabwe since the start of April, and two more are due to arrive soon. There are also containers due to be arriving in Zambia in the near future.



# KEEP ON FEEDING

How has coronavirus affected the Feed The Hungry Logistics Network?



Feed The Hungry feeds a lot of people. Over 300,000 children and young people regularly receive a meal, which has been generously provided by the support of people like you. Some of the food is grown in the country where it is then cooked and distributed; sustainable farming and local sourcing are becoming increasingly important areas of provision. But a lot of the food that feeds those 300,000 children and young people is sent from the USA, the UK and from European countries.

In 2019, Feed The Hungry USA shipped 123 food containers to Church Partners around the world - an average of 10 containers a month, each containing millions of meals. But these containers of meals can only be sent when there's food available from our suppliers, many of whom run food packing events to prepare the meals and then generously donate the product. Usually, the supply chain is pretty robust; there's

a constant supply of food coming into Feed The Hungry and being sent out. But unfortunately, as has been the case for many industries, coronavirus has caused disruption.

With a lockdown being enforced in most countries around the world, food packing events have been postponed or cancelled, resulting in there being less food available to send. Many of our Church Partners have a buffer of food, so are able to continue serving meals in the eventuality that a container is delayed. But new sources of food and methods of working needed to be found quickly.



One of the main food suppliers to Feed The Hungry is the Christian charity, 'Feed My Starving Children', who run hundreds of food packing events, producing millions of meals, each year. Feed My Starving Children worked with Feed The Hungry to change their supply model. Instead of food being packed by teams of volunteers, factories began a semi-automated process of packing the raw materials into sealed packs in bulk. Although the 'human' aspect of food packing has been put on hold, and now with a reduced capacity, the meal packs continued to be produced and sent.

In mid-May, Feed The Hungry Nicaragua received the first shipment of factory packaged food. Feed The Hungry Nicaragua, led by missionary Kendra Lange Doult, has 780 feeding programmes across Nicaragua, supporting almost 80,000 children. These meals mean that the programmes can continue to serve these vulnerable children, who would otherwise be going hungry. "Thank you", says Kendra, "for helping us to be Christ's hands and feet extended to the people of Nicaragua, for putting so much care and thought and energy and resources into a

different package so that we would be able to continue feeding our kids in our programme in Nicaragua."



Kendra Lange Doult leads our work in Nicaragua.

Circumstances are changing. We're aware that during this time, schools have closed and it has, in some cases, become more difficult for our partners to distribute food, or get food to those who need it most. We want to resume normal operation as quickly as possible, but are aware that what 'normal' looks like may be different on the other side of the pandemic. Please continue to pray for us and our partners around the world, as together, we work as Christ's hands and feet to feed the hungry.

For more information, visit [fth.org.uk/nicaragua](https://fth.org.uk/nicaragua)



## PREPARING FOR CORONAVIRUS IN KENYA

**Kibera slum in Nairobi, Kenya, is home to about one million people, and has one ventilator.**

There is limited access to running water, let alone clean water, and medical facilities are scant. Many people live in small, densely packed shelters made out of mud and wood with corrugated metal sheet roofs. An outbreak of coronavirus here would spread very quickly and have severe consequences. Mercifully, so far, Kenya has had few confirmed cases and related fatalities from the virus.

Pastors Chris and Joanne Okumu have lived in Kibera for over 30 years, following the calling they believe that God has put on their lives to serve the people living in the slum. As well as operating a Church in Kibera, they

run four schools, a nursery, a medical clinic, a water pumping station and a boarding house for girls. God has used them in incredible ways.

As news of coronavirus broke around the world, Pastor Chris saw the approaching need - to educate people about hygiene and protecting themselves from catching coronavirus.



Pastor Chris has been sharing the Gospel as well as teaching people about handwashing.

Going out onto the streets of Kibera, Pastor Chris began to share the importance of handwashing in the prevention of spreading the virus. As some people don't have access to clean water, Chris also sent out tankers of water to be distributed for free, alongside copies of the Gospels and sharing the Word of God and ministering to people.



Copies of the Gospels are distributed as people queue for free water.

As the Kenyan Government issued a lockdown of the larger cities in Kenya, the four Soweto Academy schools needed to close. The 1000 children who attend these schools receive a daily meal there; with the schools closed, a new way of feeding needed to be found. Instead of cooking the food on the school sites, students were invited to come and collect dry meal packs that could be taken home to be cooked. Students come on to the school sites, one at a time, to

collect food to see them through the following few weeks.



Students from the Soweto Academy schools have been given dry meals to cook at home.

Usually, Feed The Hungry serves 'wet meals' - meals that are cooked and served, rather than handing out the dry food packs, as this reduces the risk of food being misused or sold. However, in these unprecedented times, the priority is to make sure that the young people continue to receive a regular meal.

The risk of coronavirus to the people of Kibera is great. Pastor Chris shared, "I believe that if Corona hits us the way that it has hit America and other countries, most of our people will die. So keep us in your prayers."

To find out the latest of how coronavirus is affecting the lives of those in Kibera slum, please visit [fth.org.uk/kibera](http://fth.org.uk/kibera)

# SOURCING FOOD LOCALLY & SUSTAINABLE FARMING



**'Rat Catcher' tribes in Nepal are considered the lowest of the low. Although discrimination against tribes was made illegal in 1962, decades of the Nepalese caste system has resulted in a hierarchy deeply woven into some people's minds. Those at the bottom are considered even lower in status than animals.**

These tribes are often seen as outcasts; not worthy of attention or help. They are poor financially and often do not have access to education. It's the people in these tribes that Feed The Hungry supports.

In Nepal, Pastor Ruben Rasaili runs a school for the children from these tribes, as well as orphans. Currently, 560 children attend 'Innovative Academy', free of charge. Many of the children come

from seven surrounding 'rat catcher' villages. At school, the children are taught the English language, which can help them to access higher paid jobs in the future.

Feed The Hungry has supported Pastor Ruben for several years, both with his work in the school and also in disaster relief in response to an earthquake and severe flooding, which Nepal has been hit by in the past 5 years. The country's



Pastor Ruben supplied food to communities affected by flash-flooding in 2019.

climate and geographic location makes it prone to natural disasters.

The food that is provided by Feed The Hungry and served at Innovative Academy is all sourced or grown locally. Next to the school is a piece of land, just over an acre in size, which the school leases with the support of Feed The Hungry. On it, they grow crops such as wheat, rice, mustard and vegetables, which are used in the daily school meals. Excess produce can be sold to buy other types of food to supplement the student's regular meals.

While this method of producing food for feeding the school is working well, Pastor Ruben is looking to expand the project. "One of the crucial things we need to think of is long-term endurance", explained Ruben, "For it, cattle farming



is one of the best among all I know. The requirements are land, Buffalo, a cattle shed and workers." Feed The Hungry has seen in other countries how keeping live-stock can not only provide additional income for a project, but also gives a source of fertilizer for the soil, helping it to continue to produce good crops.

Nepal is just one of the countries in which Feed The Hungry is developing sustainable farming.

To find out more, visit [fth.org.uk/nepal](http://fth.org.uk/nepal)



# NEWS

To keep up to date with all our latest news stories go to [fth.org.uk/news](https://fth.org.uk/news) or follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



## DOORSTEP SWAP SHOP

Thank you to Sarah Saunders, a Feed The Hungry volunteer who, during the UK lockdown, found a creative way to raise funds for Feed The Hungry. She started with leaving some items of food in her porch - tins and dried non-perishables. Alongside was a sign inviting people to take what they needed, but for any item they took, replace it with another item of their own food that they didn't want or need. If there was something that someone wanted but didn't have anything to swap it with, just leave a donation for the item. Within the space of a week, Sarah had raised over £150 in donations and still had food left on her doorstep.

If you've been doing some creative fundraising during lockdown, please let us know.



## PRAYER POINTS

Please continue to pray for our work, both at home and aboard:

- Pray for our partners in other countries, particularly those who have needed to stop the feeding programmes because of distancing restrictions.
- Please pray for all of the young people around the world who Feed The Hungry support. Pray that their needs will be met during this time.
- Pray for those in the UK who don't have enough to eat; that everyone will be able to get the support they need.

**Please consider financially supporting the work of Feed The Hungry. To donate, phone 0303 3000 484 or visit [fth.org.uk/fieldreport](https://fth.org.uk/fieldreport)**